

April 1998



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*Together, we can solve environmental problems with communities in common sense ways*

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**This Fact Sheet will tell you about:**

- The Gateway Initiative
- Indoor Pesticide Misuse
- Ozone (Smog)
- Urban Sprawl Initiative
- Gateway Educational Initiatives
- Where to get more information

**Who are the Gateway Partners?**

- U.S. EPA (Regions 5 and 7)
- Illinois EPA (IEPA)
- Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH)
- East St. Louis Action Research Project (ESLARP)
- East St. Louis Community Action Committee (ESL CAN)
- East St. Louis Housing Authority
- Missouri Department of Health
- U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of Illinois
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Illinois Attorney General's Office
- St. Clair County Sheriff's Department
- New Spirit
- Neighbors United for Progress
- Mississippi River Basin Alliance
- Stop Polluting Illinois (SPILL)
- St. Clair County State's Attorneys Office
- Scott Air Force Base
- Solutia (Monsanto)



*Graphic by Susan Rittenhouse, U.S. EPA*

## **GATEWAY ACTIVITIES UPDATE**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Gateway Initiative (Gateway) provides a forum to address local environmental issues. Gateway was created by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), along with other Federal, State, and local agencies concerned about environmental issues in southern Illinois and Missouri. The governmental agencies work with local citizens, environmental groups and others to provide creative, common-sense solutions to environmental problems. This fact sheet provides information about on-going activities in the Gateway region.

### **INDOOR PESTICIDE MISUSE**

#### **A NATIONAL PROBLEM**

##### **The Problem**

A crisis has arisen within cities, especially among urban poor. In their attempt to control cockroaches, some people have sought the services of seemingly trustworthy pesticide businesses who offer cheap cockroach control. The danger is the chemicals they use: illegal, home-brewed products never intended for indoor use. Once applied, these illegal pesticides remain in the home for years, continually putting residents at risk.

In the last several years, multiple incidents of agricultural insecticide misuse in homes, businesses, and institutions, particularly in low income urban areas, have come to the attention of U.S. EPA. In order to meet the public need for cheap, quick, and effective cockroach control, unlicensed individuals have unlawfully treated homes with extremely toxic outdoor agricultural insecticides. These incidents have jeopardized hundreds of lives nationwide and cost millions of dollars in home decontaminations.

The insecticide of choice has been methyl parathion (MP), commonly known as "cotton spray", but U.S. EPA is aware of several other insecticides which have been used as well. MP is a

**Methyl Parathion is a man-made insecticide registered to control insects on agricultural crops only. It is illegal to use MP inside homes.**

highly toxic insecticide, which can be used lawfully on certain crops outdoors. Unfortunately, a pattern of misuse has emerged. Since 1994, over 6,000 homes in 9 states have been contaminated with MP, and U.S. EPA suspects further abuse in even more. To date, 23 individuals have been arrested nationwide for illegally selling and using MP in residential areas.



The cleanup of MP is costly. For example, over 1200 homes in Jackson County, Mississippi, are being decontaminated at a projected total cost of 50 million dollars, and in Chicago, approximately 100 homes are being decontaminated at a cost of over 10 million dollars.

Besides MP, a seriously toxic agent called Compound 1080 (used legally in western states for coyote control) has been used illegally in Chicago area restaurant basements for rat control. The sale or distribution of Chinese Insecticidal Chalk also continues to be a problem, and U.S. EPA is aware of at least two other toxic agricultural insecticides that were used indoors in 1997.

## The Health Threat

U.S. EPA is extremely concerned about this misuse. As a result, U.S. EPA is beginning to work with State pesticide enforcement agencies to escalate inspections through a new Urban Initiative. U.S. EPA and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) are concerned about the health consequences of this misuse and its impact on residents, especially

children and the elderly. Children and senior citizens are more vulnerable because their bodies have trouble metabolizing the chemicals. Children can easily be exposed by playing on the floor and then putting their hands or contaminated objects in their mouths. Pregnant or nursing women are also at a higher risk.

Anyone, however, can be exposed to MP by simply breathing, eating, drinking, or touching anything contaminated with the chemical. Symptoms of MP exposure are flu-like, including headache, nausea, dizziness, and anxiety. Moderate exposure can result in muscle twitching, weakness, lack of coordination, excess sweating, abdominal cramps, vomiting, and diarrhea. Severe exposure can lead to convulsions, unconsciousness, cardiac arrest, and possibly death. Anyone exposed to MP should contact their physician immediately, as well as the local Poison Control Center and State Department of Health.

Another concern is the sale of concentrated or diluted liquid insecticide to homeowners in unlabeled household containers, such as milk, juice, or liquor bottles. Some of these insecticides actually resemble milk when diluted. When such containers are stored within easy reach of children, it greatly increases the risk of accidental ingestion, poisoning, and possibly death. As little as 15 drops of a 6.5% MP solution can kill a small child, and a couple of teaspoons can kill an adult. Learn to recognize MP. It is a brownish liquid that turns milky white when mixed with water. It smells like rotten eggs and leaves a yellow stain on indoor surfaces where it has been sprayed.

Cats and dogs may be easily exposed to MP when they come in contact with contaminated surfaces such as floors. Because of their small body weights, illnesses in pets may be a first warning sign. Exposed animals suffer the same adverse health effects as people.

## You Can Help

U.S. EPA is aggressively attacking this urban problem through increased enforcement monitoring and enhanced communication to professional associations, health care organizations, businesses, community groups, and the public. We must address not only the problem of illegal application, but must also educate residents in proper and SAFE cockroach control. We cannot solve these problems alone and certainly need the help of everyone to foster "safer" indoor insect control and identify unscrupulous pesticide applicators. U.S. EPA needs

YOUR help in informing communities of the dangers posed by misused pesticides. Working together, we can prevent potentially tragic misuse of pesticides within homes and save lives. If you are aware of someone misusing pesticides within homes, operating without proper certification or licensing, or distributing pesticides not registered with U.S. EPA (check label), please contact the agency listed below:

In Illinois Contact:  
U.S. EPA Region 5  
Pesticides Program Section (DT-8J)  
77 West Jackson Blvd.  
Chicago, IL 60604  
(312) 353-2192

In Missouri Contact:  
U.S. EPA Region 7  
Pesticides Program Section  
Kansas City, KS 66101  
(913) 551-7033

## URBAN SPRAWL INITIATIVE

Starting April 1, 1998, the U.S. EPA Gateway Initiative Team will be looking for citizens in St. Louis and Metro East to participate in regional discussions regarding "urban sprawl." Urban Sprawl is the movement of people from inner cities to newly created suburbs. This affects many aspects of life, including the environment.



Is "urban sprawl" good or bad? Should there be a regional plan concerning this issue? Come find answers to these questions and provide your input by participating in the discussions.

If you are interested in participating, contact: Andrew Anderson at (312) 353-9681, or e-mail him at [anderson.andrew@epamail.epa.gov](mailto:anderson.andrew@epamail.epa.gov). We look forward to hearing from you.

## OZONE

Ground-level ozone is commonly referred to as smog. Smog is formed when a mixture of air pollutants are "baked" in the hot, summer sun. These pollutants are released from cars and factories.

When people think about ozone, they usually picture a thick layer of smog over Los Angeles. They may not think that the Greater St. Louis metropolitan area also has a smog problem.

However, people in the Greater St. Louis metropolitan area face a challenging ozone problem that affects outlying suburban and rural areas, as well as St. Louis and Metro-East.

Although it cannot be seen or tasted, ozone can have a variety of effects on your respiratory system:

- ◆ Coughing and Wheezing - Ozone may irritate lungs and throat.
- ◆ Shortness of Breath - Ozone may constrict breathing passages.
- ◆ Chest Pain - Ozone may react with lung tissue, causing swelling.

These health effects are of concern to anyone who works, plays, or spends time outdoors; even those in excellent health. However, the effects are most dangerous for asthmatics, children, and the elderly.

You can protect yourself by:

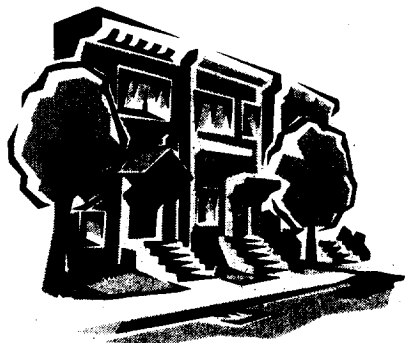
- ◆ Watching for Ozone Action Days - Ozone Action Days are when weather forecasters predict weather conditions likely to cause high ozone. Call the Air Quality Hotline for daily ozone levels at (314) 444-1199.
- ◆ Limiting Time Outdoors - People at risk should try to limit their time outdoors on high ozone days. When indoors, it is recommended to stay in a well ventilated or air-conditioned environment.
- ◆ Contacting Your Doctor - If, at any time, you experience symptoms such as tightness in the chest, coughing or wheezing, contact your doctor or local clinic.

Actions you can take to reduce ozone pollution include: postponing mowing your lawn on Ozone Action Days; filling your car's gas tank in the evening; and carpooling, bussing, walking, or biking to work.

For more information, you can contact the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency at (800) 621-8431.

## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE GRANT AWARDED

On August 16, 1996, U.S. EPA awarded a grant to the University of Missouri-St. Louis (UMSL) Public Policy Research Center under the agency's Community/University Partnership (CUP) Environmental Justice Program. The \$250,000 grant is intended to allow UMSL to work over a three year period with local community organizations to identify and address environmental issues in some minority and low-income neighborhoods of the St. Louis area.



One of UMSL's first steps was establishing an Environmental Justice Empowerment Board. The board includes representation from UMSL, Project H.O.P.E ( Helping Other People Emerge), St. Louis Association of Community Organizations (SLACO), the St. Louis City Community Development Agency, U.S. EPA Regions 5 and 7, and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. The board has met on a regular basis to set direction, discuss issues, and make decisions concerning grant activities.

Working with Project H.O.P.E., UMSL identified three neighborhoods in the St. Louis metropolitan area felt to have the greatest potential for environmental justice concerns. Neighborhoods targeted for this project were Winstanley, a neighborhood in East St. Louis, Illinois, Hyde Park, a St. Louis neighborhood, and the city of Pagedale, Missouri, located in St. Louis County. UMSL has worked to identify sources of environmental concern in each of these neighborhoods, and developed an inventory of facilities and sites subject to federal and state environmental requirements. Examples are Superfund sites, leaking underground storage tanks, hazardous waste generators, and wastewater discharges.

UMSL has also drafted an environmental justice handbook for each of these communities. Each handbook identifies sites or facilities of concern in the community, the environmental statute that addresses it, and explains the environmental regulatory requirements the facility or site is subject to. The handbook also gives guidance to residents on investigating and resolving environmental issues in their community. The handbook will be available for distribution in the near future.

Another highlight of the grant was the risk assessment and environmental program training provided to CUP participants and neighborhood leaders during the summer of 1997 by U.S. EPA Region 7. This training gave participants valuable information on how toxic contaminants can affect human health and the environment.

Additionally, Project H.O.P.E. has established communication with organizations and people living in each of the target communities. A series of public meetings was held in each of these communities, allowing residents the opportunity to discuss and describe their environmental concerns with the CUP grant participants. Issues such as air pollution from industrial sources, contaminated drinking water, asthma, allergies, cancer, illegal dumping, and contaminated soil were some of the issues raised by residents. As a result of these meetings, a small group of individuals has volunteered to take the lead in beginning to address environmental problems identified in the Winstanley community.

Project H.O.P.E. has also conducted a preliminary health assessment in each of the target neighborhoods. Approximately 100 homes in each neighborhood took part. Health issues similar in nature to those mentioned by residents during the public meetings and possibly associated with environmental conditions were identified in many homes.

Over the final 18 months of the grant, UMSL and the CUP Grant Empowerment Board plan to further assist residents in the target neighborhoods by trying to identify participants willing to volunteer their efforts in addressing environmental issues identified in their neighborhoods. UMSL will also provide technical support concerning specific issues.

Project H.O.P.E. will continue to work with community organizations and leaders to identify the community resources available to address environmental issues in their neighborhood.

# GATEWAY EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES

## TOOLS FOR SCHOOLS COURSE

On Friday, March 27, three U.S. EPA Region 5 staff members taught a "Tools For Schools" class at East St. Louis Senior High School. The course was supported by East St. Louis Public Schools, the American Lung Association, and the Illinois Department of Public Health. Approximately 100 Maintenance Department employees from East St. Louis Public Schools attended the one day session, covering basic indoor air quality information, heating and ventilation system control, toxicology, and energy efficiency and lighting. East St. Louis Public Schools have made a commitment to implement "Tools For Schools" in all 28 schools. The schools are also considering becoming an Energy Stars Building Partner, saving the schools money, improving lighting in the classrooms, and helping the environment.



For more information, contact:

Jack Barnette Phone: (312) 886-6175

E-mail: [barnette.jack@epamail.epa.gov](mailto:barnette.jack@epamail.epa.gov)

Eric Glatstein Phone: (312) 886-5046

E-mail: [glatstein.eric@epamail.epa.gov](mailto:glatstein.eric@epamail.epa.gov)

## ENVIROSCAPE

The enviroscape is a model of a watershed that demonstrates how water pollution occurs and how to prevent it. It has proven to be a very helpful educational tool.



On April 16 - 17, La Yvette Thompson of the U.S. EPA Water Division demonstrated the Enviroscape to Metro East area schools on behalf of the Mississippi River Gateway Geographic Initiative. The demonstrations showed students and teachers what they can do to improve water quality and the importance of water conservation and preservation.

We currently have wetland, ground-water, basic, and riverbank Enviroscape models for demonstration in schools, museums, and park districts.

For more information contact La Yvette Thompson at (312) 353-4416.

## SUPERFUND TRAINING

On March 18, Noemi Emeric, U.S. EPA Community Involvement Coordinator, and Dion Novak, U.S. EPA Remedial Project Manager, conducted "This is Superfund" training to approximately 25 individuals near the NL-Taracorp Superfund site in Granite City, Illinois. The trainees had recently participated in the new U.S. EPA "Jobs Training Initiative" program, and had received extensive training in the skills necessary to work in the environmental industry.

Trainees were instructed on the fundamentals of the Superfund process, and then participated in three exercises. Each exercise was designed to enhance participants' understanding of the different Superfund phases, and then to experience the building of consensus that is critical to Superfund success. The first exercise allowed them to evaluate a hypothetical Superfund site and make their recommendations for initial site cleanup activities. The second exercise involved a mock public meeting where each assumed a different role. This role playing allowed participants to more fully understand the different viewpoints that U.S. EPA must consider in order to accomplish Superfund site cleanup. The third exercise built on the first, and the participants worked together to select a cleanup option for the hypothetical site.



"This Is Superfund" training is available for other interested parties in the Gateway area. Contact either Noemi Emeric at (312) 886-0995, or Dion Novak at (312) 886-4737 for more information.

# STORM SEWER STENCILING PROJECT

Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville (SIU-E) is hoping to increase the awareness of non-point source pollution and its impact on surface water quality under a grant awarded by U.S. EPA.

Non-point source pollution is any substance that can enter storm sewers and ultimately adversely impacts surface water quality. Examples include runoff containing chemicals from fertilizer, pet wastes, pesticides, and street litter.

So far, SIU-E, through their Rivers and Groundwater Projects program, has developed curriculum materials on non-point source pollution, collected painting and stenciling supplies, taught a "hands-on" training course for area teachers, and supervised storm sewer stenciling activities in Gateway area schools. The storm sewer stencils state: **"Don't Dump, Drains into the Mississippi."**

**DON'T DUMP,  
DRAINS INTO THE  
MISSISSIPPI!**

A meeting with area teachers was held on February 11 in Collinsville. The purpose was to educate teachers on non-point source pollution, introduce curriculum materials, explain the stenciling procedure, and ask teachers to then organize these activities for their respective schools.

Each school is being asked to work with their school board and local officials to organize a storm sewer stenciling day in their community. Students, with the help of volunteers from the community, will stencil all storm sewers in their area. SIU-E expects to receive extensive media attention and is relying on area schools to spread the message. Actual stenciling days are currently being planned for April and May. A member of the Gateway Team will participate in these stenciling activities, and further information can be found in future newsletters.

## Science Exercises

SIU-E has developed science exercises for the following four grade groups; K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12.

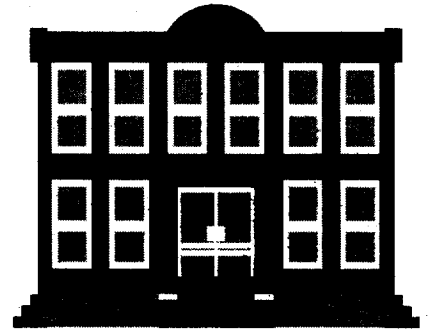
SIU-E will be working with school science departments to incorporate these exercises into their science classes. Examples of activities for the four groups are:

**K-2:** "Water and a Little More", "Pond Scum", and "Which Drop Hangs Around the Longest?"

**3-5:** "Water Drainage", "Water Testing", and "Pollution Preventers"

**6-8:** "What if Water Cost as Much as Gasoline?", and "Slick Cleanup Activity"

**9-12:** "Lingo Bingo", "It's Sedimentary, My Dear Watson", and "Pollution P.I."



SIU-E is also providing updates at their web site.

The address is:

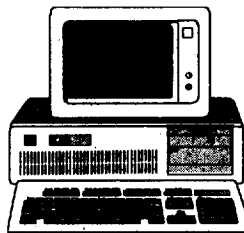
<http://www.siu.edu/OSME/river>

Under the heading: "Storm Sewer Stenciling Project."

## GATEWAY INTERNET SITE

### **SOLUTIA (MONSANTO) STRIVES TO BE "A GOOD NEIGHBOR"**

In the past few years, Solutia (Monsanto) has made some significant contributions to Gateway area projects. In 1995, two \$10,000 grants were given to Operation New Spirit to clean up derelict buildings in the East St. Louis Goose Hill and Rush City neighborhoods. In 1996, Monsanto donated another \$10,000 to East St. Louis for Humanity to help build affordable housing for low income families in East St. Louis. It is the Gateway Team's hope that other corporations and businesses in the area will follow Monsanto's example.



By now, everyone has heard of the Internet - the connection of millions of computers around the world. It's a great source of information on almost any topic.

As a result, the Gateway Initiative Team of U.S. EPA, Region 5, now has an Internet site ready to serve you. It contains team information, data for all environmental media (air, water, and land), a description of events in the St. Louis area, news of environmental accomplishments, and links to St. Louis community groups.

To get there, first you need to hook up to the Internet. You can do this from home if you have a computer, or see if your local library or school has a connection to the internet. After connecting, enter the address <http://www.epa.gov/region5>. Next locate and click on the "Special Interests" link, and from there you should see the "Gateway Team" link.

If you have any ideas concerning content on the Gateway Home Page or need help connecting, contact Andrew Anderson at (312) 353-9681. Happy surfing!

### **MAILING LIST**

If you did not receive this fact sheet in the mail, you are not on our mailing list. If you would like to be on the Gateway Initiative mailing list, please fill out this form and mail to:

**Gordie Blum (P-19J)**  
Community Involvement Coordinator  
U.S. EPA Region 5  
77 West Jackson Blvd.  
Chicago, IL 60604-3590  
(312) 353-8501  
E-mail: [blum.gordon@epamail.epa.gov](mailto:blum.gordon@epamail.epa.gov)

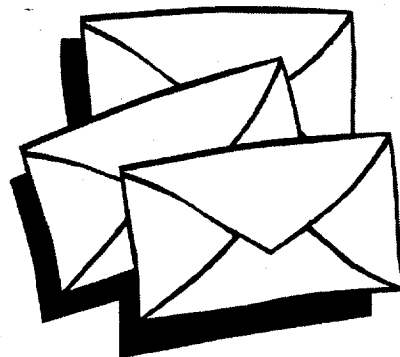
Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Should you have any questions on the information in this fact sheet or seek more information on the Gateway Initiative feel free to contact the following individuals:

**Jerome King (S-6J)**

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U.S. EPA Region 5  
77 West Jackson Blvd.  
Chicago, IL 60604-3590  
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